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Individual Survey
**How to Write Horror Fiction for
Teenagers**

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**Как создаются рассказы жанра
«ужастик» для подростков**

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Introduction

Why Teenagers are Fond of Horror Fiction

We have chosen this topic, because I have always been interested in horror fiction. Reading such books makes me feel delighted. Not every author can create a masterpiece. And we are trying to understand how to write such stories. How can the authors carry their readers away with the plot of the story? How can they make us feel what the characters feel, make us frightened together with them? What do they do to frighten us with every rustle or a shadow because of reading a horror story before sleep? I will try to find the answers to these questions in my research.

In our everyday life we, teenagers, often come across the horror stories theme - we watch such films in cinemas, tell each other different stories, scare our friends and then laugh together. All these situations are connected with horror fiction. And I think, it will be interesting for people to know more about it and its history. Besides, in my research we want to reveal the secrets of horror fiction writing.

This subject is very interesting for me. I am really in love with books and especially with the ones of horror fiction genre. I read a lot of them and I am always happy to find a new horror story and spend the whole evening enjoying it. Then I can not sleep and have nightmares. Have you read the works of Steven King? Or "Dracula" written by Bram Stoker? They are classic horror fiction books. But we like books by modern authors, especially by Stine Robert Lawrence. I didn't have good translations of his books, and had to read them in original - in English and liked them a lot. All the time I was reading I was wondering how the author can create it.

The aims of our research are:

- to analyze the notion of horror fiction;
- to find the answer to the question: how to write horror fiction for teenagers.

The results of our work can help people in their future work, or they can simply help to keep up the conversation. In the end we will reveal the secrets of horror fiction writing, get information about the history of this genre and famous authors of horror fiction. It is one of the oldest genres in the world literature and its history can be interesting for many people.

1. What is Horror Fiction?

Horror fiction is one of the oldest genres of literature. Its aim is to scare its readers, to create horror atmosphere. The genre has origins in the 18th century as gothic horror. At that time the authors began to write about supernatural worlds instead of the real one in their works.

Horror fiction, built on our fears and dark thoughts, makes us dive into the gloomy world, where we worry about our life and soul. We like to scare ourselves and reading horror fiction is a fine way to do it.

Mainly, people who like to tickle their nerves and to get a dose of adrenaline prefer these books. A lot of people like feeling fear after reading such stories. The atmosphere of the books in gothic literature style is full of mystery, fear and exactly this literature is called the source of inspiration for modern cinematography. A lot of films are created on the basis of this genre.

Horror fiction, as a literature genre, always keeps its popularity, changing with the stream of time. The theme of death, mysticism and evil worries a lot of people. Fear is attractive for us. Children will always be afraid of darkness, adults will worry about the unknown worlds on other planets or feel fear thinking about the dark worlds on our own planet, which are known for only dead or crazy ones. I think, that is why horror fiction is so popular.

Today there is a great amount of books by classic and modern authors written in this genre on the shelves of the shops. Horror fiction is a good way to spend our leisure time. A lot of people like to be frightened by a horror story.

So I can say, that horror fiction is a genre of fantastic literature, the aim of which is to make the reader feel fear. It has a set of supernatural characters, such as ghosts, witches, vampires, werewolves, or usual people under the reign of dark power. It has a lot of directions, and all of them are very popular among its readers.

Particular Features of Horror Fiction

1. Its aim is to scare its readers, to create horror atmosphere.
2. Typical characters are people, who find themselves surrounded by mystical events and dark characters such as witches, vampires, werewolves, ghosts.
3. The plot is built on a mysterious event, for example, on somebody's disappearance, death etc.

2. The History of Horror Fiction

Horror fiction has its roots in folklore and religious traditions, focusing on death, afterlife, evil. These peculiarities were manifested in stories about witches, vampires, werewolves, ghosts.

In the 18th century gothic horror developed from these sources with "The Castle of Otranto" written by Horace Walpole. It was the first time, when a modern novel incorporated elements of the supernatural instead of pure realism. That first novel of gothic horror inspired such works as "The Mysteries of Udolpho" written by Ann Radcliffe in 1794 and "The Monk" by Matthew Lewis in 1797.

The gothic tradition blossomed into the genre which we call horror literature now in the 19th century. Famous works and characters that we see in the cinema today have their origins in such works as "Frankenstein" by Mary Shelly (1818), the "The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1890) by Oscar Wilde, "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson (1886). Each of these novels created an enduring icon of horror seen in modern films and other performances on the stage and screen.

Most of the books of this genre were written at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. The works, which continued the traditions of gothic novel, appeared later as well (works by Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde, Bram Stoker and others). Some famous writers of the 19th century were under the influence of the genre (Charles Dickens, R.L. Stevenson, Henry James, Arthur Mechen).

In the 20th century horror literature separated from the gothic literature. We refer to some works by Blackwood, Lovecraft, Steven King of that time. The genre called "dark fantasy" appeared out of fantasy and gothic. Different collections of stories and anthologies got the wide distribution. We can mention "Wide Roses" by Anna Lemoin and a thousand-pages serial "Vampire Burny or Blood Feast".

To conclude I can say, that the history of horror fiction is long and interesting. A lot of people contributed to its evolution. Thanks to them, we can read horror literature now.

3. The Secrets of Horror Fiction Writing

There are a lot of directions in horror literature. Every direction has its typical features, and every author has his own style of writing. There is so big variety of methods to write horror fiction! In the works of Lovecraft the psychological fear of unknown instead of mystical features is used, Steven King, the king of this genre, liked the unexpected overcomes the most. But all the horror fiction books are written by certain standards.

Firstly, the main aim of the books in this genre is to scare readers. This aim can be achieved by different methods, but in general, by keeping the reader in anxiety during all the book, till the climax, making his imagination work.

The action of the book usually takes place in a mysterious place (parallel world or another dimension). In this case there is a disguised entrance (a mirror, a hole, a wardrobe etc.). The action can also take place in a gothic palace, a ghost house, or our usual world. The author lays the emphasis on something else then.

The plot is built around a mysterious event as a kidnapping, an unusual death, somebody's disappearance or simply something strange. And the characters try to save somebody's life, to solve the mystery, to find something.

In these books dark power, mystical creatures can also be present. They disturb the main character. Often such creatures as witches, ghosts and even people are obsessed by devil.

The overcome of these stories is always different. Every author finishes the story differently. Somebody finishes the story by the death of one of the main characters, the other makes the story end happily, but with the entailed continuing (the evil can return, the malefactor can take revenge etc.)

These are basic canons of horror fiction writing.

4. Genre Peculiarities of the Story "1408" by Steven King

We can analyze the story by Steven King "1408" as an example of horror fiction which was written in accordance with typical features of this genre. A lot of *authors place their stories and actions into a horrible room in a hotel*, and this book is among them.

In the centre of the plot we can see the main character Mike Enslin who is a famous author of mystical books, but rather skeptical to everything supernatural. By chance he learns about room 1408 in the hotel "Dolphin", in which horrible events take place. Mike becomes interested in it and eager to visit. He knows about 56 suicide cases in this room and goes there not paying attention to anybody's warnings. That completely corresponds to genre peculiarities of horror fiction.

Entering the room at first he notices nothing mystical. But when the old clock on the shelf begins the 60-minutes counting, he has to make great efforts not to get crazy in the irrational world of room 1408, full of fears and horrible events. (corresponding to horror fiction features: *the main character finds himself in a supernatural world*). Then he hardly survives this terrible hour trying to get rid of his fear, but in vain. At this time the voice in his telephone tells him that he has been in the fifth circle of the hell and suggests him the choice between the suicide and overcoming this again and again (horror fiction feature: *the character has a choice on which his life depends*).

Mike does not want to choose any of these variants. He overcomes the difficulties successfully and gets out of the situation making a fire and burning room 1408. He survives and lives his life, having only memories about the horrible hour spent there. (*happy end is also a typical feature of horror fiction*)

So I can say that the book corresponds to the typical features of horror fiction genre. The main character finds himself in a mystical world, full of fears and supernatural horrible events. He is trying to get out of the horrible world in one of the hotel rooms and to survive during the main course of the story. He succeeds, but has to live the rest of his life never forgetting the events of that night. He is always trembling when the telephone rings and wakes up because of nightmares.

Conclusion. The Tips for Writing Horror Fiction for Teenagers

This research can be interesting for people who are fond of horror fiction. In our research we have determined the notion of horror fiction. We have also found the answer to the question how to write horror fiction for teenagers.

In the first chapter we have found out what horror fiction and its particular features are. In the second one we have studied more about its history beginning from the 17th century. In the third chapter we focused on typical features of horror fiction writing and then analyzed the story "1408" by Steven Kings from the point of view of these features.

We have come to a conclusion that in order to write a good horror story one should:

- 1) place the characters into a mystical atmosphere of fear, where strange events take place;
- 2) design the plot around a mysterious event such as a kidnapping, an unusual death or somebody's disappearing;
- 3) make the main character struggle for his life or to save somebody;
- 4) use the dark power, mystical creatures (witches, ghosts, people obsessed by devil), disturb the main character;
- 5) keep the readers in anxiety during the whole story till the climax making their imagination work;
- 6) show negative consequences for the character at the end of the story (death of the character, some disease, nervousness).

Taking into consideration these tips one can create a good horror story.

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